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MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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July 12, 2016

## **Montana Public Service Commissioners raise concerns over Colstrip closure settlement**

**HELENA, Mont. – July 12, 2016** – Montana Public Service Commission Chairman Brad Johnson, R-East Helena, and Vice-chairman Travis Kavulla, R-Great Falls, issued the following statements today regarding the settlement between the owners of the Colstrip generating station, the Sierra Club, and the Montana Environmental Information Center, which will result in the closure of generating units 1 and 2 by July 2022.

### **Chairman Brad Johnson:**

“With this settlement, radical environmental groups have successfully destroyed part of a critically important economic driver in Montana, and did so by holding a gun to the heads of the Colstrip owners. This settlement robs local governments and schools across the state of much needed resources, eliminates high-wage jobs, and also has the potential to increase electricity costs for Montana ratepayers. It’s absolutely astonishing that the groups suing to close Colstrip think this settlement is what’s best for Montana.”

### **Vice-chairman Travis Kavulla:**

“The continued operation of Colstrip Units 1 and 2 defray certain operating expenses that may otherwise be shifted to the customers who receive service from the newer plants, Units 3 and 4, including NorthWestern Energy’s Montana customers. The Commission will look at this issue closely at the appropriate time. In the meantime, we are trying to understand how the withdrawal of this capacity affects the electricity market in the state and the region.”

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